

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EURE-00 SCI-06 NASA-04 NSF-04 NAS-01

COME-00 OTPE-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 EB-11

CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 TRSE-00 OMB-01 MC-02

ACDA-19 RSR-01 /121 W

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P R 261634 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2170

INFO AMEMBASSY BERN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TSPA, XG, UK

SUBJECT: UK POSITION ON POST- APOLLO NEGOTIATIONS

REF: (A) STATE 119186, (B) PARIS 17270, (C) LONDON 4703
(D) LONDON 6658

1. SUMMARY. FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES DISCUSSION WE HAVE HAD WITH STEELE (DTI) ON BRITISH REACTION TO US PROPOSAL (REF A) ON SPACELAB AGREEMENT AND UK POSITION AND VIEWS ON FORTHCOMING EUROPEAN SPACE COUNCIL MEETING. UK NEEDS US ASSURANCE WITHIN APPROXIMATELY A WEEK ON AVAILABILITY OF LAUNCHER FOR ESRO'S MARITIMEOTS PROJECT IF UK IS TO DEVELOP A POSITION FOR COUNCIL MEETING THAT WOULD RETAIN PROSPECT OF POSSIBLE BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN SPACELAB. STEELE ALSO URGED REPLY BEFORE JULY 12 TO AEROSPACE
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MINISTER'S QUESTIONS CONCERNING EUROPEAN LAUNCHER
LICENSING. END SUMMARY.

2. STEELE SAID UK, IN GENERAL, SATISFIED WITH CONSTRUCTIVE US COUNTEROFFER ON SPACELAB AGREEMENT. HE POINTED OUT UK'S HOPED FOR OBJECTIVES NOT ACHIEVED WITH RESPECT TO IMPROVED ACCESS TO US LAUNCHER TECHNOLOGY AND TECHNOLOGY OUTSIDE OF SPACELAB ITSELF BUT THAT UK WAS RESIGNED TO FACT THAT THESE OBJECTIVES WERE NOT REALISTICALLY ATTAINABLE. BEYOND THIS HE SAID UK, OF COURSE, SUPPORTED MINOR MODIFICATIONS PROPOSED IN NEW EUROPEAN AIDE MEMOIRE (REF B) BUT, AS FAR AS UK WAS CONCERNED, US ACCEPTANCE OF THESE CHANGES WAS NOT CRUCIAL.

3. STEELE SAID THAT, AT THIS STAGE, UK DECISION ON WHETHER IT WILL PARTICIPATE IN POST APOLLO PROGRAM DEPENDS NOT SO MUCH ON WHAT US DOES AS ON HOW RELATED ISSUES TO BE DISCUSSED IN JULY 12 MEETING OF EUROPEAN SPACE COUNCIL ARE SETTLED. IN COUNCIL MEETING, UK WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR EUROPEAN FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BRITISH GEOSTATIONARY TECHNOLOGICAL SATELLITE (GTS) PROJECT. IF SUFFICIENT EUROPEAN SUPPORT IS OBTAINED, UK WILL PARTICIPATE IN POSTAPOLLO. IF, AS APPEARS MORE LIKELY ACCORDING TO STEELE, SUPPORT FOR GTS IS NOT OBTAINED, UK MAY HAVE AS A FALL- BACK POSITION, PARTICIPATION BY BRITISH INDUSTRY IN ESRO'S MARITIME ORBITING TECHNOLOGICAL SATELLITE (OTS) PROJECT. UK DECISION ON THIS FALL- BACK HAS NOT YET BEEN TAKEN AND WILL DEPEND CRITICALLY ON EARLY AND FAVORABLE US RESPONSE TO INQUIRY, WHICH STEELE SAID HAS BEEN MADE THROUGH BRITISH EMBASSY WASHINGTON, ON WHETHER US WILL MAKE LAUNCHER AVAILABLE FOR MARITIME OTS. IF US LAUNCHER ASSURANCE IS RECEIVED WITHIN WEEK, STEELE SAID UK WOULD HAVE TIME BEFORE COUNCIL MEETING TO DECIDE WHETHER TO OPT FOR MARITIME OTS IF EUROPEANIZATION OF BRITISH GTS PROJECT FAILS TO GAIN NEEDED SUPPORT. WITHOUT LAUNCH ASSURANCE, GOVERNMENT COULD NOT DEFEND DOMESTICALLY ABANDONMENT OF GTS WHICH WILL BE UNPOPULAR WITH BRITISH AEROSPACE INDUSTRY EVEN UNDER BEST OF CIRCUMSTANCES. SAME CONSIDERATION WILL MAKE IT NECESSARY FOR UK TO INSIST ON FIRM COMMITMENTS ON MARITIME OTS BY EUROPEAN PARTNERS AT COUNCIL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MEETING BEFORE GIVING UP ITS GTS. THEREFORE, UK PARTICIPATION IN POST- APOLLO DEPENDS FIRST ON US LAUNCHER ASSURANCE FOR OTS AND SECONDLY ON FIRM EUROPEAN COMMITMENT TO OTS PROJECT.

4. STEELE EXPECTS JULY 12 COUNCIL MEETING TO BE " DIFFICULT" PRINCIPALLY BECAUSE OF L3 S ISSUE. STEELE SAID UK

THOUGHT AT END OF MAY THAT FRENCH HAD FINALLY " GOTTEN
THE MESSAGE" THAT UK WOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN L3 S PRO-
GRAM BUT IN PAST FEW WEEKS PRESSURE FROM FRENCH AND
GERMANS FOR UK SUPPORT AGAIN BEING APPLIED. FRENCH
SCIENCE MINISTER CHARBONNEL RECENTLY WROTE BRITISH
AEROSPACE MINISTER HESELTINE THAT FRENCH HAD UNDERTAKINGS
FROM VARIOUS EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS TO FUND 94 PERCENT OF
L3 S PROJECT AND, IN EFFECT, THREATENING TO SABOTAGE
BRITISH INTERESTS IN COUNCIL IF UK DID NOT PICK UP
REMAINING 6 PERCENT. THIS WAS FOLLOWED- UP BY CALL FROM
GERMANS SAYING THAT IF UK STAYS OUT OF L3 S PROGRAM,
MARITIME OTS PROJECT WOULD BE IN TROUBLE.

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5. STEELE SAID DANES AND ITALIANS HAVE DENIED TO BRITISH THAT THEY HAVE MADE ANY COMMITMENTS ON L3 S AND HE IS DOUBTFUL THAT FRENCH ACTUALLY HAVE 94 PERCENT FINANCING PROMISED BUT THAT, IN ANY EVENT, BRITISH POSITION ON L3 S IS FIRM-- IT WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN L3 S EVEN IN THE AMOUNT OF 6 PERCENT AND ANY PACKAGE PROPOSAL CONDITIONED ON BRITISH LAUNCHER SUPPORT IS A "NON-STARTER". IF NECESSARY, HE SAID, UK WOULD SIMPLY CONTINUE GTS PROJECT ON ITS OWN AND THIS WOULD MEAN UK WOULD HAVE NO SPACE FUNDS AVAILABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN POST- APOLLO. SUCH A DEVELOPMENT, HE SAID, WOULD REPRESENT A SERIOUS SET- BACK FOR FUTURE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS UNDER PROPOSED EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY. STEELE AGAIN STRESSED NEED FOR FORTHRIGHT US REPLY EARLIEST TO MINISTER HESELTINE'S REPEATED QUEST FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TIONS CONCERNING POSSIBLE LICENSING OF US LAUNCHERS FOR MANUFACTURE IN EUROPE (SEE LONDON 4703 AND 6658). ONLY WITH SUCH A REPLY, HE EMPHASIZED, COULD UK HOPE SERIOUSLY TO UNDERCUT AT CRITICAL TIME FRENCH ARGUMENT FOR L3 S PROGRAM.

6. RE AEROSAT, STEELE SAID UK STILL FAVORED COMMENCEMENT OF PROGRAM, AT LEAST ON LIMITED SCALE, DESPITE BRITISH CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY VIEW THAT THERE WOULD APPEAR TO BE LITTLE EARLY NEED FOR OPERATIONAL SYSTEM WITH NAVIGATION/ SURVEILLANCE CAPABILITY. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT UK NOT INTERESTED IN CROSS- LINKING AEROSAT AGREEMENT WITH POST- APOLLO PROGRAM.

7. COMMENT. WE CANNOT OVEREMPHASIZE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY US REPLY TO HESELTINE LETTER (NOW MORE THAN TWO MONTHS OLD) ON EUROPEAN LAUNCHER LICENSING. REPLY BEFORE JULY 12 WOULD GREATLY STRENGTHEN BRITISH HAND AT COUNCIL MEETING AND POSSIBLY FORESTALL EUROPEAN COMMITMENT TO L3 S PROJECT. WOULD APPEAR BRITISH MUST ALSO HAVE US ASSURANCE WITHIN A WEEK OR TEN DAYS ON LAUNCHER FOR MARITIME OTS IF OPTION IS TO BE KEPT OPEN ON POSSIBLE BRITISH PARTICIPATION IN POST- APOLLO SPACELAB PROGRAM.

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